

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 12, 2006. Claims 1 to 5, 7 to 16, 18 to 30, 32 to 41, 43 to 51 and 53 to 56 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 22 to 26, 36, 47 and 56 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 was objected to for an informality that has been attended to by amendment. Other ones of the claims have also been amended to address typographical errors noted in a review of the claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

The Office Action more or less maintained the previous art rejections in which Claims 1 to 5, 7 to 16, 18 to 30, 32 to 41, 43 to 51 and 53 to 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,909,602 (Nakai). The rejections are traversed and the Examiner is requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in light of the following comments. In addition, Applicant requests a personal interview to discuss the following points of patentability so as to clear up what Applicant believes to be a continued misreading of the disclosure contained in the applied art.

The present invention relates to routing print jobs to an appropriate printer so as to prevent forgery. In the invention, an image processing apparatus (e.g., a PC) is connected with a plurality of scanners and a plurality of printers. The PC receives information from each of the scanners and from each of the printers indicating whether or not the scanner or printer has a forgery-preventing function. Based on the received forgery-preventing information, the PC generates a device information table. Then, when the PC receives image data from one of the scanners, it refers to the generated table to determine if

the scanner has a forgery-preventing function. If so, then the PC determines that the received image data can be routed to any of the printers, regardless of whether or not they have the forgery-preventing function, because the scanner itself can use its forgery-preventing function to prevent forgery. If not, however, then the PC determines that the scanned image data can only be routed to one of the printers that has the forgery-preventing function so that the printer can detect an attempt at forgery. As a result, even though a scanner may not have the forgery-preventing function, the PC can select an appropriate printer so as to prevent forgery.

Referring specifically to the claims, Claim 1 is an image processing apparatus comprising first receiving means that receives information from a first scanning apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first scanning apparatus, and receiving information from a second scanning apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the second scanning apparatus, second receiving means that receives information from a first printing apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first printing apparatus, and receiving information from a second printing apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the second printing apparatus, generating means that generates a device information table on the basis of the information received by the first receiving means and the information received by the second receiving means, and controlling means that controls which printing apparatus is to print image data received from one of the first or second scanning apparatuses based on the device information table generated by the generating means, wherein the first receiving means and the second receiving means receive information indicative of the presence or absence of a forgery-

preventing function when at least one of the first and second scanning apparatuses and the first and second printing apparatuses is changed.

Claims 22 and 23 are method and computer program claims, respectively, that substantially corresponds to Claim 1. Claim 26 also substantially corresponds to Claim 1, but is written in non-means-plus-function form.

Claim 47 also includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to an image processing apparatus that communicates with one or more image reading devices and one or more image output devices, comprising first receiving means that receives information indicating whether or not a device has a forgery-preventing function from each of the one or more image reading devices and each of the one or more image output devices, generating means for generating a device information table on the basis of the information on the one or more image reading devices and the information on the one or more image output devices received by the first receiving means, second receiving means that receives image data read by one of the one or more image reading devices, judging means that judges whether or not the image reading device that reads the image data includes a forgery-preventing function from the forgery-preventing function information of the image reading device received by the first receiving means, and controlling means that controls which of the one or more image output devices the image data received by the second receiving means is to be output to in order to output the image data to an appropriate image output device based on a judged result of the judging means and the device information table generated by the generating means, wherein the first receiving means receives the information indicating whether or not the

device has the forgery-preventing function when at least one of the image reading devices and at least one of the image output devices is changed.

Claim 56 is a method claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 47.

Claim 11 includes features similar to Claim 1, but is more specifically directed to a user selecting a printer. Thus, Claim 11 is an image processing apparatus, comprising first receiving means that receives information from a first scanning apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first scanning apparatus, and receiving information from a second scanning apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the second scanning apparatus, second receiving means that receives information from a first printing apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first printing apparatus, and receiving information from a second printing apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the second printing apparatus, generating means that generates a device information table on the basis of the information received by the first receiving means and the information received by the second receiving means, inputting means that inputs information related to a selected scanning apparatus for image scanning, and notifying means that notifies a user, based on the information received by the first receiving means, the information received by the second receiving means, information stored in the device information table, and the information input by the input means, of at least one available printing apparatus for which image data can be sent to for printing, wherein the first receiving means and the second receiving means receive information indicative of the presence or absence of a forgery-preventing function when at least one of the first and second scanning apparatuses and the first and second printing apparatuses is changed.

Claims 24 and 25 are method and computer program claims, respectively, that substantially corresponds to Claim 11. Additionally, Claim 36 substantially corresponds to Claim 11, but is written in non-means-plus function form.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the present invention, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of an information processing apparatus receiving information from a first scanning apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first scanning apparatus, receiving information from a second scanning apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the scanning apparatus, receiving information from a first printing apparatus indicating the presence of a forgery-preventing function in the first printing apparatus, and receiving information from a second printing apparatus indicating the absence of a forgery-preventing function in the second printing apparatus, and generating a device information table based on the received forgery-preventing function information of the first and second scanning apparatuses and the first and second printing apparatuses.

Nakai teaches a system of copying machines that transmit image data amongst themselves. When an image is scanned by one copying machine, and if it does not have a specimen image judging section, it nonetheless scans in the image and transmits the scanned-in image data to a second copying machine that does have the specimen image judging section. The second copying machine processes the image to determine whether or not the scanned-in image is copy prohibited. If so, the second machine prohibits the copying and notifies the first copying machine of the copy prohibition. However, if the image is not copy prohibited, then the second machine informs the first machine of the

result and the first copying machine prints out the image. In another embodiment, if the second copying machine determines that the image data can be copied, but that the image data has an image density too large to be handled by the first copying machine, the second copying machine may then transmit the scanned-in image data to a third copying machine that has a higher image resolution printing ability so that the image data can be printed out. Thus, in Nakai, the scanned image data is transmitted from one scanner that can't judge forgery to another scanner that can judge forgery, and then if the image is not copy prohibited, it is transmitted to a printer. It should be noted that none of the printing apparatuses in Nakai have a forgery-preventing function, but rather, it is the image scanning portion of each copying machine that has the forgery-preventing (image judging) function. As a result, if none of the copying machines of Nakai have an image judging section, it would be impossible to prevent forgery. In contrast, in the invention, if none of the scanners have a forgery-preventing function, forgery can still be prevented by transmitting the image data to a printing apparatus that does have the forgery-preventing function. Thus, Nakai simply fails to anticipate the claimed invention.

Nakai also fails to teach the claimed feature of generating the device table based on the forgery-preventing information received from each of the scanning apparatuses and from each of the printing apparatuses. In this regard, the Office Action relies on Table 2 of Nakai at column 16, and the description at column 31, lines 1 to 17 as allegedly teaching the claimed features of generating the device information table based on information received forgery-preventing function information of first and second scanning apparatuses and first and second printing apparatuses. However, Applicant believes that reliance on these portions of Nakai is misplaced.

Specifically, Table 2 of Nakai is not a table that is generated by any of the copy machines. Instead, it is merely a table produced in the patent itself for description purposes of which functions are contained in the various copying machines. That is, as expressly stated in the patent, the table is merely for comparison purposes of the various image edit functions contained in each copying machine for an understanding of the disclosure contained in the patent. None of the copying machines of Nakai generate a device table as claimed, much less generate a device table based on forgery-preventing function information received from one or more image scanning apparatuses and from one or more printing apparatuses.

As for the disclosure at column 31, it merely teaches that the copy machines may include an image judging section for prohibiting copying of particular image data (e.g. money). Such copy prohibiting functionality has been well known in the art and the cited portion of Nakai merely reiterates that which was already known. What is conspicuously missing from Nakai however, are the claimed features of generating the device information table based on information received forgery-preventing function information of first and second scanning apparatuses and first and second printing apparatuses.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of Nakai, each of independent Claims 1, 11, 22 to 26, 36, 47 and 56 are not believed to be anticipated by Nakai and therefore, are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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